

Appendix B: Federal Register Publication: Notice of Intent



Federal Register

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Part IV

**Department of
Interior**

Bureau of Land Management

**Resource Management Plans; Rawlins,
Wyoming; Notice**

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY-030-02-1610; WY-100-02-1610]

Great Divide Resource Management Plan; Rawlins, Wyoming

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent To Revise The Great Divide Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Call for Coal and Other Resource Information for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rawlins Field Office, Rawlins, Wyoming.

SUMMARY: The BLM Rawlins Field Office is initiating a revision of the Great Divide Resource Management Plan (RMP) to guide future management actions on the public lands within the Rawlins Field Office administrative (or management) area. The existing Great Divide RMP will continue to guide management actions and decisions for the Rawlins Field Office until the RMP revision is completed.

The revised RMP will be a comprehensive land use plan that will allocate and identify allowable public land and resource uses, land use and resource condition management goals, public land and resource use conditional requirements, and general management practices needed to achieve RMP objectives. It will also identify lands available for consideration for transfer from BLM jurisdiction (via public disposition or transfer to another agency).

Requirements, standards, and procedures for preparing RMPs are contained in 43 CFR 1600, BLM Manual 1601, and BLM Handbook H-1601-1. The BLM Washington Office will provide further guidance on nationwide standards for BLM land use planning. The BLM Wyoming State Office will continue to provide guidance for land use planning in the ten Field Offices in the State of Wyoming to guide BLM managers in producing balanced public land and resource use decisions that meet requirements of law and regulation. The Rawlins Field Office will develop planning criteria applicable to the planning effort to provide the public a preview of the types of considerations that will be made in developing the RMP decisions for the planning area.

Freedom of Information Act Considerations: Public comments submitted for this planning effort, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review in their entirety after comment periods close, during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, at the Rawlins Field Office. If you wish to withhold your name or address

from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments.

Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals or officials representing organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

DATES: This initial call for coal and other resource information and identification of issues for this planning effort will be open for 60 days and will commence with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

Notification of future scoping activities and meetings and other meetings or hearings and any other public involvement activities that may be scheduled during the course of the planning effort will be handled through public notices, media news releases, internet postings, or mailings.

The purpose of this call for resource data, issues and concerns is to help BLM identify specific problems, concerns, and issues pertaining to the various resource and land use values in the Rawlins planning area and to help identify any data gaps, data needs, and data sources pertaining to the planning area. This planning effort is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2004.

ADDRESSES: Documentation of the planning process and completed documents for the Rawlins RMP planning area will be available at 1300 North Third Street, P.O. Box 2407, Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-2407. All comments must include legible full name and address on the envelope, letter, or postcard.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT: If you wish to be placed on the Rawlins RMP mailing list, or if you wish to comment on the preliminary list of public land and resource problems, conflicts, concerns, or issues being considered in the Rawlins RMP (currently known as the Great Divide RMP) revision, contact John Spehar, Rawlins RMP team leader, at the Rawlins address above or phone (307) 328-4264.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The current Great Divide RMP provides management guidance and direction for approximately four million acres of BLM-administered public land surface and five million acres of BLM-administered federal mineral estate in Albany, Carbon, Laramie, and Sweetwater counties. When the Great Divide RMP is revised, it will be renamed the Rawlins RMP to be consistent with the current organizational structure and naming of BLM land use plans in Wyoming.

The Rawlins RMP planning area includes five wilderness study areas

(WSAs--Encampment River Canyon, Prospect Mountain, Bennett Mountains, Adobe Town, Ferris Mountain), four areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs--Jep Canyon, Como Bluff, Shamrock Hills, Sand Hills), and three special recreation management areas (SRMAs--Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, North Platte River, Shirley Mountain Caves). Revision of the Rawlins RMP may result in altering the designation of these ACECs and SRMAs, and the management prescriptions for these areas could also change. The potential for additional special management areas will be explored, and if any other areas are nominated for special management area designation, they will be considered in the EIS for the planning effort.

To date, the BLM has identified eight preliminary issues associated with the existing management direction provided by the Great Divide (Rawlins) RMP. The BLM invites the public to comment on these preliminary issues and to identify any additional issues, concerns, problems or conflicts that should be considered in the Rawlins RMP revision effort. Comments should be sent to the Rawlins address above.

Issue 1: Potential Conflicts Between

Mineral Exploration and

Development Activities and Other Land

and Resource Uses and Values

Issue 2: Special Management Area

Designations or Changes

Issue 3: Access Limitations to Public

Lands and Resources

Issue 4: Wildland/Urban Interface

Concerns

Issue 5: Special Status Plant and Animal

Species Management

Issue 6: Concerns for Maintaining or

Improving Water Quality and Meeting

State and Federal Water Quality

Standards

Issue 7: Conflicting Demands for

Consumptive and Non-consumptive

Vegetation Uses

Issue 8: Potential Conflicts of Various

Public Land and Resource Uses with

Recreation, Cultural Resources (including

National Historic Trails) and

Paleontological Resources

The BLM is requesting the public to help identify additional problems and conflicts and resource management opportunities that should also be addressed in the Rawlins RMP revision process.

This notice includes a request for any available resource information and data pertaining to the Rawlins RMP planning area. The purposes of this request are (1) to assure that the planning effort has sufficient information and data to consider the fullest possible range of public land and resource uses, management options and alternatives, and (2) to include the call for coal resource information required by the Federal Coal Regulations (43 CFR 3420.1-2).

The call for coal resource information is issued to obtain any available coal resource data and any other resource information pertinent to applying the coal unsuitability criteria, and to identify any additional areas of interest for possible Federal coal leasing in the Rawlins RMP planning area. Coal resource information submissions will assist the BLM in determining those areas with coal development potential. As appropriate and as part of the Rawlins RMP planning process, the coal screening/coal planning procedures will be conducted on those areas with Federal coal development potential to determine which Federal coal areas are acceptable for further consideration for leasing. This coal resource information will also be pertinent to addressing potential coal bed methane development areas.

Some of the Rawlins RMP planning area is within the Green River-Hams Fork Coal Production Region. A Notice that the coal region was decertified was published in the Federal Register, Vol. 53, No. 77, April 21, 1988. Federal coal leasing regulations contained in 43 CFR 3425 are now in effect and coal reserves in the Rawlins RMP planning area are now subject to "leasing by application". This type of coal leasing is essentially done on a case-by-case basis, rather than through the regional leasing process under 43 CFR 3420. Note that the sale and issuance of federal coal leases under these provisions is still done through a competitive bidding process.

Identification at this time of definite interests in future leasing of Federal coal in the Rawlins RMP planning area, substantiated with adequate coal resource data, will allow the BLM to address this potential during the planning effort and possibly avoid unnecessary work, delays, or amendments to the RMP in the near future.

The BLM has very limited capability to conduct additional coal or other resource inventories in the planning area. Thus, parties interested in federal coal leasing and development or in coal bed methane exploration and development will be expected to provide coal resource data for their areas of interest. The schedule for completing this planning effort requires that areas of interest and coal resource data must be submitted within 60 days following publication of this notice. If coal resource data are insufficient or Unavailable for your area(s) of interest at this time, but can be obtained in 2002, the BLM will accept, until April 30, 2002, an estimate of the extent and locations of the coal resource and a schedule for providing the data.

The adequacy and timing of the coal resource information provided will determine the extent to which the Federal coal resource, its development potential and coal bed methane development potential may be addressed in this planning effort.

Public participation will be an essential component of this planning effort. Several techniques for providing public involvement opportunities will be used during the planning process, including: **Federal Register** announcements, one-on-one discussion with interested groups and individuals, internet postings, articles in local news media, and individual mailings to all parties who have expressed an interest in the process. For those persons wishing to be placed on the Rawlins mailing list, notify the BLM contact provided in the ADDRESSES section of this notice.

Dated: January 17, 2002.

Alan R. Pierson,
State Director.

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